



Council 4 AFSCME Testimony GAE Committee 3/25/13
Re: SB 727

My name is Brian Anderson. I am a legislative representative for Council 4 AFSCME, a union of Connecticut public and private employee members. **Council 4 opposes S.B. 727, *AN ACT CONCERNING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST UNDER THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND STATE EMPLOYEES.***

Our main concern with this bill is that it economically restricts who can hold state office. It is quite severe. It would seem to bar anyone working for a bank, insurance company, union or a myriad of other entities from holding state office.

It would seem that the purpose of such a bill would be to create a full-time legislature, or to restrict available state office candidates to members of wealthy luxury class who do not require a job to support themselves. If the purpose is to create a full time legislature then such language should be added. That is a concept that our union could support. If it is to simply restrict holding office to those who do not need a job to support themselves, then we oppose it. That would do serious damage to the concept of democracy. The average member of the state legislature is already wealthier than the average member of the public. I doubt our ancestors, those who risked their lives by hiding our charter in the famous Oak tree, would appreciate this attempt to strangle democracy.

The U.S. Census reported last year that 50% of all American families are working poor or destitute. The Federal Reserve reported that the average American family has lost 40% of its wealth (mostly due to real estate losses). We need bills that strengthen and encourage, not diminish and discourage, working family participation.